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MESSIAH AND THE SPIRIT OF YAHWEH

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Preface

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The initial task before us is to examine the concepts of Messiah and the Spirit of God, and their relationship, as found in the Old Testament and late Judaism. Before we begin our inquiry, however, there are several issues that demand our consideration. First and foremost among these is the problem of generalizing from our written sources. We must recall that the Bible itself often reflects more than one point of view. Moreover, we must also recall that any given passage in the Bible reflects its author's particular bias, and not necessarily the sentiments of the common and uneducated masses. This is to say nothing of the problem of constructing an image of the Messiah or Holy Spirit free from our own pre-understandings in faith.

Moreover, to say that serious scholarship has been, and is, unsettled concerning the Messiah is to understate the case. To be somewhat facetious but none the less to the point, we might say that the one thing most scholars can agree on is the use of euphemisms for the very frank term "impossible." As one reads the material concerning the Messiah, standard phrases appear again and again — tentative conclusions, provisional conclusions, speculative answers, etc. etc. On the whole, current scholarship still tends to be dominated by the works of

Joseph Klausner and Sigmund Mowinckel; Klausner emphasizing the significance of Moses and the Exodus in the evolution of the messianic idea, and Mowinckel placing his emphasis on the Israelite conception of kingship.¹ I suspect that for our particular purpose we shall find these two major viewpoints to be complementary rather than opposing.

Another critical factor for us is that we read the history of the Jews through the spectacles of Christianity. We tend, therefore, to engage in a sometimes sophisticated, and sometimes not so sophisticated perusal of the Old Testament, Apochryphal, and Pseudepigraphical documents in search of a typology that lends itself to the service of Christian Apologetics. But the harsh fact remains that the great majority of the Jews of our Lord's time, whose attitudes embodied pre-Christian messianic ideas, did not feel that He was their Messiah. Also, in looking back through the prism of our faith, we tend to impart a meaning to various passages of the Old Testament, which for their author and his immediate readers were devoid of messianic overtones.

One further preliminary issue needs to be brought to attention: the varied concepts of the Spirit in the Old Testament. Generally speaking, the term "spirit" arises within many contexts: spirit of God, spirit of man, good spirits, evil spirits, etc. We must realize from the outset the difficulty of categorizing every reference to "spirit" as a reference to what we as Christians know as the Holy Spirit. Biblical usage simply will not permit this type of artificial and rigid con-

struction. Again, we must constantly bear in mind our distinctively Christian presuppositions. "Our modern difficulties about the relation of the Spirit to God arise because we hold a conception of personality unknown to the biblical writers. We think of separate and distinct personalities, hard and impermeable, each sharply distinguished from the others: hence our 'problem' of the doctrine of the Trinity."²

With all this firmly in mind, our approach will be as follows. We shall look to the biblical and extra-biblical sources; but in every case we shall endeavor to retain their unique historical and theological setting. Our perspective then will above all be Jewish. Christian understanding must wait for its place at the end of our present inquiry. Much of our investigation will in fact be pioneering; for although much has been written on each of the major topics in our title, there is a paucity of writing that seeks to delineate the relationship between God's Messiah and God's Holy Spirit. The task before us, then, is through random sampling and a reliance on secondary sources as summaries of what would otherwise be voluminous materials, to determine the character of that relationship.

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We have observed above that a rigid definition of "spirit" is virtually impossible as a result of the many differing uses of the term. However, a working definition is necessary if we are to establish a common ground for discussion. We may,

therefore, envisage "spirit" as the biblical word for expressing the outgoing activity of God.³ But what is this outgoing activity of God? How was it that the biblical authors came to recognize certain phenomena as being specifically pneumatic in nature? Apparently it was the extraordinary in mental and physical life, and especially in national life, which came to be regarded as the work of the Spirit.⁴ It is probable that the ancient Hebrews used the notion of spirit as a theological catch-all for the enigmas of human existence, in much the same way as we on a popular level hear recurrent references to "God's will" in the face of the inexplicable. The central fact is, however, that in pre-Exilic literary sources the Spirit is never named as a cause except of those things which pertain to the affairs of the people of Israel as a whole. Only those personal experiences which have to do with national matters are of concern to the biblical authors prior to the Exile.⁵ Typical of many kindred references are the following: Judges 3:10, The spirit of Yahweh came upon Othniel, and he judged Israel; I Samuel 10:6, Saul is to prophesy through the gift of Yahweh's spirit. The predominant usage of spirit in pre-Exilic literature is of God acting in the lives of men. Only later does speculation concerning the cosmological and natural aspects of God's spirit emerge. The pre-Exilic writings are not philosophical or introspective. "Their range lies largely in the thought of the activity of God, and especially of that activity in relation to man."⁶

For our purposes, then, we need especially to note that aside from attributing the extraordinary to the spirit, pre-Exilic sources assume a special relationship between God on the one hand and judges or prophets on the other as a result of the gift of the spirit. Frequent references are made throughout the pre-Exilic literature to the charismatic gifts of prophecy, skill in ruling, wise judgment, prowess in war, and bodily strength as the fruits of God's spirit.⁷ Now although none of the passages in which these references occur can be called messianic, (especially if we choose to align ourselves with Mowinckel who maintains that all of the genuinely messianic passages date from the period after the fall of the monarchy and the destruction of the Israelite state⁸), we must at least recognize that prior to the establishment of the monarchy a tradition was emerging in which certain attributes of Israel's heroes were ascribed to the direct intervention of the spirit. The importance of this fact is that it is not a far step for a people destined to fall under the yoke of oppression to look backward to the witness of Yahweh's might in the past and to hope for His intervention in the future. Moreover, it is not difficult to see how such lofty views would come to be applied to the Israelite conception of kingship; a conception which, as we shall see, expands the notions found in the early traditions, and provides the immediate framework from which subsequent messianic speculation would arise.

The accession of the Davidic monarchy came to mark the pinnacle of Israel's national history. From this time onward

the Israelites, throughout their subsequent history, would look backward with longing eyes to the glory that they once possessed. With the division of the kingdom after the reign of Solomon, the prevailing court intrigues, the succession of unjust rulers engaged in foolish wars which finally culminated in the Exile, it is small wonder that an epoch of national power and prestige, of prosperity and sound leadership, should become the prototype of Israel's future hope.

It would be wise to pause here and call attention to several important factors. First and foremost, we must distinguish between the concepts of a future hope and a messianic expectation. Secondly, we must come to a provisional definition of just what we mean by the term "Messiah." Mowinckel develops his schema of the future hope from the Royal Psalms, and his notion is reasonably easy to grasp. It is no more than the earnest belief that one day things will be better, a belief that all men of all religions or no religion cling to in times of desperation. What is significant about the Israelite future hope is, to use Mowinckel's terminology, that it found its focal point in the royal ideology.

"The Israelites' attitude to their king is most characteristically expressed in the term used of his relation to Yahweh, Yahweh's Anointed. Anointing was an act which first and foremost ratified the king's status as the chosen of Yahweh, and as duly installed. It was a holy ceremony, a cultic act, which conveyed extraordinary 'holy' or 'divine' faculties and qualities."⁹ The conveyance of this divine power was attributed to

the gifts of Yahweh's spirit as it was bestowed upon the newly consecrated king. By virtue of the divine spirit the new king became a new man. He received a new soul and a new disposition, the gift of superhuman wisdom, and extremely long life. He could do what others could not do; he stood now in a closer relationship to Yahweh than anyone else. Mowinckel sums up the endowment which Yahweh has given to the new king in two words, righteousness and blessing. "Righteousness" means the carrying out in life of Yahweh's justice. We have already met some of the manifestations of righteousness, but others are not difficult to imagine: success in the defeat of Israel's (and therefore Yahweh's) enemies, good fortune, relief for the poor and oppressed, for the widows and fatherless, etc. etc. These gifts were also thought to extend to natural phenomena. Both the land and the people reap all that could be hoped for under such a king. "Thus the king is the savior to whom the people look for salvation, both in the negative sense of deliverance from enemies, danger, and need, and in the widest positive sense of good fortune and well-being." . . . "Considered from one point of view, then, the king is more than human. He is a divine being, possessing this superhuman quality because Yahweh has 'called' and 'chosen' him to be the shepherd of his people, and has made him His son, has anointed him and endowed him with his spirit. He performs the will of Yahweh, and transmits His blessing to land and people. He represents Yahweh before the people."

"But as a human being, a man from among the people (i.e., a representative man from the chosen people of Yahweh) he also represents the people before Yahweh; and gradually the main stress comes to be put on this aspect of his vocation."¹⁰

Now given this picture of the Israelite ideology of kingship it is difficult to ignore its similarity to ideas which we usually refer to as messianic. Indeed, the church has consistently used the Royal Psalms and the prophetic utterances of the monarchical period as a source for an apologetic demonstration of the Messiahship of Jesus. But a distinction must be made and a working definition of Messiah must be hazarded if we are to go on. The term itself represents the Hebrew and Aramaic words for "the Anointed One." We have already witnessed the significance of the newly anointed king, so there is no reason to disclaim his title as Yahweh's Anointed One. However, in later Judaism, as we shall see, the Messianic figure came to have a special meaning of an eschatological cast. We must hold in abeyance, therefore, a rigid definition at this point, and rather wait until we have examined the post-Exilic and late Jewish writings before coming to a decision. For the present we need only to follow the guidelines established by Mowinckel, by restricting our use of the term Messiah to those writings dated after the Exile. The rationale embodied here is that so long as Israel had a reigning king their expectations clustered about the future hope. That is, as long as kingship remained in Israel, the hope was alive that one day Yahweh would raise up a king, not unlike David, who would

fulfill the royal ideology.¹¹

Before we move into the literature of the Exilic period we must insure that certain ideas are clear in our minds. So far we have seen how the spirit was delegated to individuals for prophecy, judgment, and leadership. Now although prophecy would continue to be an important witness to the presence of Yahweh's spirit, it was the hero worship that affixed itself to the judges and the subsequent royal ideology that would provide a fertile source for genuinely messianic speculation. The future hope, born in affliction, looking to the past for a type and to the future for fulfillment, presents a glimpse of Messiah. But the future in this ideology was the immediate empirical future, born with each tomorrow and the rise of each new king, with the hope that perhaps he, or his successor, or his successor's successor would be the "One". Nevertheless, it is but a small step from this future hope to hope in an entirely future and eschatological Messiah. With the dissolution of the monarchy in 586 B.C. hope in the divine kingship could not but wane. "'Messiah' is the ideal king entirely transferred to the future, no longer identified with the specific historical king, but with one who, one day, will come."¹²

The experience of the Exile had a profound effect on the Hebrew people; an effect, which from our point of view was to be both positive and negative. It was during this period that the Hebrews were forced to come to grips with the reality of their theological position. From here emerged the notions of

universality, individual responsibility, the problem of the righteous sufferer, the quest for an explanation concerning the presence of evil in the world, and above all speculation with regard to God's Messiah. In the midst of her affliction Israel was to develop statements of faith which were to be of great significance in New Testament times. Conversely, there was a strong tendency toward a pseudo-nationalism, a tendency that would bring with it controversy upon the return from exile, and ultimately lead to the sectarian polemical writings of Esther and Judith, and their universalistic counterparts, Jonah and Ruth. This sectarian tendency, as we shall shortly see, was to become a real stumbling block both for the Rabbis and for our Lord.

In the Exilic and post-Exilic literature the spirit began to be portrayed in a somewhat different way. During this period of Israel's history, the natural inclination to look backward, both as a source for hope and as an explanation for present circumstances, dominated Hebrew literature. It was at this time that the Deuteronomic School was at work completing their history; Joshua through II Kings. Further, it is also reasonable to assume, although we have no concrete proof, that much of the apocalyptic and eschatological ideas that would appear after the Return in 538 B.C. had their origin in the land of the Exile. Given this situation, then, it is not surprising to find that references to the Spirit's guiding or influencing human actions are mostly concerned with either the past or the future of Israel.¹³

In the pre-Exilic literature the dominant idea was that of the charismatic gifts of the Spirit, especially in their relationship to prophecy and kingship. As each of these offices declined, the notion of the Spirit as the source of individual gifts also declined. In its place arose a cosmic interpretation of the Spirit. God's action in creation and in the ordinary processes of external nature are here assigned to the Spirit, quite apart from any bearing which these may have on human life. Job 26:13, God's spirit (breath) made the heavens luminous; Psalm 104:29, God's spirit sustains life. On the one hand then, we see the Spirit conceived as the first cause and controlling power in the external world, while on the other it is conceived of as the guide of Israel's past history and the force that will shape her future. In the last phase of this future destiny it becomes the name for God's activity in the Messianic Age.¹⁴ This particular point must be stressed. In general, we may say that the devastating effect of the Exile fostered an emerging notion that the Spirit was not presently active in the lives of God's chosen people. Now although the cosmic implications of the Spirit dominated, and there was a ground swell of belief that the Spirit was not active in Israel, there was also a tenacious clinging to the prophets as the last vestige of the Spirit's gift to individuals, and the witness to its limited presence.

It was during this period that II Isaiah and Ezekiel were to write, emphasizing Israel's national self-consciousness and producing theological insights of momentous significance for

later development. In neither of their works need the allegedly messianic passages designate anything other than the nation as a whole. Whether we choose to align ourselves with those scholars who see the "Servant" as an individual or those who see here the nation is really of small consequence for our present purpose. We need to be aware, however, that in Jewish messianic speculation the figure of the Servant was never assigned a role without great modification of his characteristics as originally portrayed.¹⁵ Now concerning Cyrus as the Lord Anointed, (Isa. 45:1), II Isaiah's theological breadth and depth suggests that he was not above regarding Cyrus as being raised up by Yahweh for the deliverance of Israel. This would be consistent with his notion of Yahweh's sovereignty. However, ". . . there is not the slightest justification for those who have said that Cyrus was Second Isaiah's Messiah. The two essentials of the Messiah, in every form of the doctrine, are that he should be an Israelite and righteous."¹⁶ What is of significance, however, in II Isaiah is the notion of the gift of the Spirit in the future restoration of Israel (Isa. 42:1, 44:3, cf. Isa. 32:15, 61:1). We need note that according to Ezekiel 36:26 ff., Yahweh in the days to come will put a new Spirit in Israel, a spirit that understandably will revive the many facets which appeared in the royal ideology. In chapter 37, we read of Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones. Therein is expressed the belief that real life is possible only through Yahweh's Spirit. We are dealing here with the totality of human existence, physical, moral, and

spiritual. These passages from II Isaiah and Ezekiel serve to reinforce the point made above that after the Exile an idea began to emerge that, (1) the Spirit of Yahweh provided the fullness of life, and (2) that Yahweh's Spirit was in abeyance.

As we move now to the period between the advent of Cyrus and the advent of Alexander the Great, 538-333 B.C., we find an increase in the narrowing of Jewish nationalism. Laurence Browne feeling the anguish of this period has written: "I shall try to find what excuses I can for the poverty of the spiritual achievement of those days, for the obsession of their minds with bricks and mortar and other material things, for their sectarian and political narrowness, for the devotion to a written law that made inspiration old-fashioned, for the gloom that descended upon them when there was no prophet more, and for the self-satisfaction of priests who thanked God that they were Jews and not as other men."¹⁷

The canonical writings from the beginning of this period bear witness to a tendency for the writers to adopt the prevailing views of the national messianic savior. We may say that it represented a looking to the future without drawing on the lofty views of the past. Both Haggai and Zechariah hailed Zerubbabel as their Messiah. They emphasized none of the qualities looked for in the righteous deliverer of Israel's future hope. Instead they revived the idea of the swift and terrible Yom Yahweh, emphasizing the speedy destruction of Israel's enemies.¹⁸ Ezra and Nehemiah were seemingly too busy

with temple, walls, and law to indulge in any messianic hope. The codification of the Law and the concern with legal obedience left no room for a religion of the heart. The day was to dawn when anyone claiming the charismatic gift of the Spirit would be branded an imposter. Zechariah 13:4, "When that day comes, every prophet shall be ashamed of his prophetic vision; they will no longer put on their hair cloaks to utter their lies, but they will all say, 'I am no prophet.'" Joel 2:28 states that on the Day of the Lord the Spirit will be poured out upon all mankind, but mankind for Joel and his contemporaries meant the Jews. Thus the Persian period ended with a religion confined to rules and regulations, with no hope for the Gentiles, no more expectation of a truly messianic king, and the voice of prophetic inspiration effectively silenced.¹⁹

On the positive side, however, emerging also from this period was the rise of synagogue worship. The significance of this development is that through the liturgical observances of the synagogues the common people became acquainted with the sacred ancient writings. Therefore, throughout the experience of return, attempts at restoration, the Maccabean Wars, and the desecration of the Temple, the Jews had a well-spring from which they could draw strength and consolation. The tension between national and religious aims, however, continued with the Maccabees trying to make a human king into the Messiah. I Maccabees 14:41 seems to suggest that they hoped Simon would turn out to be the Messiah (cf. Eccclus. 50). Nevertheless,

there was a vision of hope that was not to be denied. The literature of Apocalyptic was born with the book of Daniel.

The time had come when men would evaluate the trend of history and conclude that the only option was for God to destroy the present wicked and chaotic world, and bring in a new and perfect world-order. The apocalyptists were men of this persuasion. They combined a pessimism about men with an optimistic faith in God. They realized that mankind would not establish God's kingdom, and they felt the weight of centuries of opposition to God's will, but rather than say there would never be a reign of peace and holiness they said that God himself would bring it about, and soon.²⁰

Now we need not concern ourselves here with the problem of Daniel's "Son of Man." We need only note that the emphasis in Daniel, as in other apocalyptic, shifts from retribution to a stress on a life of blessedness, with the Messiah occasionally as the representative of a holy Israel similar to the notion that we have observed in the royal ideology. I Enoch 90, if it refers to the Messiah, supports this idea of a righteous nation represented by a righteous Messiah.²¹ The literature of apocalyptic, therefore, provided a much needed matrix for gathering the hope of the past, and the development of a new hope for the future.

In the canonical and non-canonical writings of the Palestinian-Jewish period from 200 B.C. onwards, the relationship between the Spirit and the Messiah becomes more pronounced. With regard to guidance or influence in the field of human

actions, the Spirit is always a possession of the Messiah.²² To illustrate: Enoch 62:2, ". . . the spirit of righteousness was poured out upon him . . ."; 49:3, "And in him dwells the spirit of wisdom and the spirit of him who gives knowledge and the spirit of understanding and of might and the spirit of those who have fallen asleep in righteousness."; Test. XII, Levi 18, "The spirit of understanding and holiness will be upon him."; Test. XII, Judah 24, "The heavens will open over him to give him the blessing of the Spirit of the holy Father, and the spirit of grace will be poured out upon him." "It is notable that in all this literature there is not one claim made of the actual possession of the Spirit by or in behalf of any contemporary."²³

Now although we may generalize about the relationship of the Spirit to the Messiah during this particular period, we also face the same problem that has arisen previously with regard to the character of the Messiah. Nowhere can we find complete agreement as to his endowments and qualities. During the Maccabean wars and the struggle for both political and religious liberty, some speculation held that the Messiah would arise from the priestly family, whence we have Levitical messianism.²⁴ If we can affirm anything at all about the Messiah it must be that he represented all that the Jews longed for which at the present time was not a part of their corporate experience. Comparatively speaking then, we can witness a growth in messianic speculation, with a paucity of references to the communal significance of the Spirit in the Apocrypha

and Pseudepigrapha, which is consonant with the fact that in the latter especially is revealed a decline in the belief of the present activity of the Spirit, and a tendency to relegate this activity both to the golden ages of the past and to the glorious age to come.²⁵ This tendency was to become increasingly true of Rabbinic Judaism, to which we must now devote our attention.

At the outset we must acknowledge that Rabbinic Judaism abounds with contradictions concerning the "person" of the Messiah, the Messianic Age, and the Spirit.²⁶

With regard to the notion of the cessation of the Spirit in Israel, we find that it is variously attributed in Rabbinic sources to the date of the destruction of the first Temple, the destruction of the second temple, or with the death of the last prophets. Furthermore, the emphasis on Torah in late Judaism produced a belief that no matter how saintly an individual might be, it was only if his environment was equally worthy that he could receive the Spirit. This belief gave rise to a messianism which looked to the future age as one that would witness the fulfillment of Torah.²⁷ None the less, in spite of the many conflicting and contradictory views, there was a widespread and explicit belief that the Spirit of God had departed from Israel.²⁸ For example, we read in Yoma 21b: "Five things which existed in the first temple were lacking in the second. These were: (a) Fire from on high. (b) Anointing oil. (c) The Ark. (d) The Holy Spirit. (e) Urim and Thummim." Also in Sanh. 11a: "When the last prophets

Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi died the holy spirit ceased out of Israel; but nevertheless it was granted them to hear (communications from God) by means of a Bath Qol."²⁹ This passage leads us nicely to the next area for our consideration; the concepts of the Shekinah and the Bath Qol.

The obvious question is, Were they synonymous with the Spirit? The answer is, apparently not.³⁰ The Shekinah, a metonym for God, was an aid to worship. It designated the presence of God among his people, "but did not indicate that character of invasive energy which always underlies the conception of the Holy Spirit."³¹ We may note in passing that this same critique may be applied to the Wisdom theme and literature. The Bath Qol, that voice from above, could not supercede Torah, and in questions of Halakah, it was not to be accepted. The Bath Qol clearly had neither the authority nor the significance that was attached to the Holy Spirit. Therefore, ". . . the evidence, both direct and indirect, of belief in the frequent activity of the Holy Spirit in Rabbinic Judaism is unconvincing. The weight of the evidence suggests that the activity was regarded as a past phenomenon in Israel's history which had indeed given to Israel its Torah, its prophets and the whole of its Scriptures, but which had ceased when the prophetic office ended."³² This does not necessarily rule out a sense of the nearness of God, which as we have seen was given expression through the notions of the Shekinah and Bath Qol. However, we have also observed that Rabbinic Judaism was focused about the Torah. Therefore, in the messianic

speculation of the Rabbis, we find a strong belief that in the Age to Come Spirit and Torah would coincide. The Age to Come would be a period of triumph for the Law, and a ceasing of the rebelliousness of Israel.³³

It is interesting to note that the person of the Messiah in Rabbinic thought is much less important than the Age of which he is the harbinger. There was a popular belief among the Jews of our Lord's time that the Millennium was at hand. There existed an opinion, expounded by the Rabbis, which by our standards would not be fixed or authoritative, but which none the less managed to grasp the popular mind, that held to a belief that they were about to enter the year 5,000 of the Creation calendar which was to usher in the sixth millennium, the Age of the Kingdom of God. Abba Hillel Silver writes: "The Rabbis generally believed on the basis of the Biblical Creation week, that 'The world will last 6,000 years and will be in chaos 1,000 years.' The thousand years prior to the destruction of the world (5000-6000) would be the years of consummation and universal blessedness."³⁴ It was the Age to Come, however, that brought with it the Messiah, and not the Messiah who would bring about the Millennium. It was because of the Millennium that the Messiah would begin his activities, and bring his gifts.³⁵ To briefly state the case, the contemporary speculation concerning the person of the Messiah waned in favor of speculation concerning the glories of the new age of which he was to be a first sign.

It is not difficult to understand how a rather sophisticated ethical and spiritual dualism, distinguishing between the ages, became predominant in late Judaism. Likewise, there was another type of dualism which served to separate the messianic thought of the common people from that of the Rabbinic scholars. In Israel's constant looking to the past, the Rabbis, through their tedious exegetical system, arrived at a rather substantial notion of the majesty of God and of His political and spiritual sovereignty in the Age to Come. The common people, however, partly as a result of their worship in the synagogue where they either read or heard the reading of Scripture, and partly as a result of Rabbinic teaching, generally held more to the old messianic beliefs of the mighty warrior and just king.

To summarize then, with the dawn of the first Christian century in Palestine there was a strong belief that the Spirit had ceased in Israel, but that the Millennium was drawing closer, a glorious age was about to begin, and the Messiah was to be a first sign of the beginning of God's Kingdom and universal blessedness. Throughout all of this speculation there were inconsistencies, contradictions, and an inability to communicate the blessings of the Age to Come to the unlearned.³⁶ It was a time that for years to come would hear the Rabbis pose the unanswerable question raised by Rabbi Eliezer in the first century: "Why is the Holy Spirit so little in evidence in Israel?"³⁷ Yet it was also a time when a great optimism characterized their views of the future.

We must note, however, that conspicuously absent from the Rabbis' view of the future Age is an explicit reference to the return of the Spirit. The only undisputed references we have to the return of the Spirit are found in the later homiletical Midrashim beginning with Gen. R. 11:4.³⁸ The questions that must be asked are: (1) Why is there a paucity of references? and (2) How does this affect our case?

To begin with the first question; it is extremely difficult to see how the Rabbis could have ignored the Scriptural references to the outpouring of the Spirit in the Messianic Age, and at the same time be so concerned with that Age. The most plausible answer to this dilemma is that it is to be seen as a reaction to the pneumatic claims of the early Christian church.³⁹ Most assuredly the Rabbis were hostile toward the followers of Jesus, with their claims for His Messiahship, and the insistence that the return of the Spirit had been accomplished. However, if the references to the return of the Spirit were successfully expurgated from their literature, the Rabbis nevertheless did not avoid describing the quality of life in the Age to Come. This brings us to the answer of our second question. The universal blessedness which would characterize the Messianic Age reflects all of the qualities of life which we have met throughout our survey of the pre-Rabbinic period, and which were at that time seen as the gifts of Yahweh's Spirit.⁴⁰ The evidence then, both the later direct evidence of the homiletical Midrashim, and the early and widespread indirect evidence concerning the quality of life in the coming

Age suggests that Rabbinic Judaism of the 1st century A.D. would have regarded the Age to Come as an age of the Spirit.⁴¹ Further, contemporary 1st century non-Rabbinic literature adds even more substance to this conclusion. The pneumatic emphasis of the primitive church is common knowledge. To what extent the notion of the Spirit's return was basic to the church's initial proclamation we shall shortly investigate.

For the present we must focus our attention on the Qumran community and attempt to determine what evidence there is, if any, from that source for a belief in the absence of the Spirit, and a view to its return in the Messianic Age.

The non-Christian messianic sectarians of Qumran represent a unique development. The main thrust of their writings deals with the notion of the two Spirits dwelling within man from the beginning of time; the Spirit of truth, and the Spirit of evil. These two spirits were thought to be waging a continual war for the heart of man. We should not be surprised that the sectarians could regard themselves as possessing the Spirit in some measure. The very nature of their life-style gave itself to a feeling of religious superiority, with its fastidious devotion to the Law, its emphasis on ritual purity, the notion of being "separated", and the strenuous regimen to be followed in order to gain full membership in the community.⁴² Nevertheless, there are indications that even these saintly individuals believed that there was more to be expected.

First there was the messianism of Qumran. Here we find a belief in two Messiahs; the priestly Messiah of Aaron, and the

kingly Messiah of Israel.⁴³ As we would expect at this time, the character of the Messiahs is not nearly as significant as the Age which they will usher in. The important point for our purposes, however, is that the messianism of Qumran, whatever its character, implies a coming fulfillment which gives expression to a present feeling of incompleteness.

Secondly, there are several indications which suggest that the teaching of the imminence of the two Spirits did not eliminate a belief in the invasive quality of the Spirit, either for evil or for good (CDIV13ff., CDV16ff., and CDXVI4). Further, there was a belief that the fulfillment of the sectarian discipline and the study of the Law would ultimately, "season by season", lead to the same revelations of God given to the prophets through the Spirit.⁴⁴

1QS8:12ff "And when these things come to pass for the Community in Israel (13) at these appointed times, they shall be separated from the midst of the habitation of perverse men to go into the desert to prepare the way of 'Him': as it is written, 'In the wilderness prepare the way of Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.'

(15) This (way) is the study of the Law which He has promulgated by the hand of Moses, that they may act according to all that is revealed, season by season, and (16) according to that which the prophets have revealed by His Holy Spirit."

Moreover, in several much disputed passages there is mention of the Spirit and the Messiah, the Spirit preparatory to the end time, or the Spirit as a sign of the end time.⁴⁵

CDII9ff "And he knows the years of life and the number, together with the exact date of the times of all (10) the events of the ages,

and the things to come, all that comes to pass in the seasons of all the everlasting years. (11) And in these (times) He raised up for Himself men named with a name, in order to leave survivors upon the earth and to fill (12) the face of the world with their posterity. And he made known to them His Holy Spirit by the hand of His Anointed and He showed (13) the truth;"

IQS9:3f "(3) When these things come to pass in Israel according to all the appointed times for the Institution of the Spirit of holiness (founded) in accordance with (4) eternal Truth, they shall expiate guilty rebellion and sinful infidelity and (procure) Loving - kindness upon earth without the flesh of burnt offering and the fat of sacrifice, but the offering(s) of the lips in accordance with the law shall be as an agreeable odour of righteousness, and perfection of way shall be as the voluntary gift of a delectable oblation."

IQS4:20f "Then God will cleanse by His Truth all the works of every man, and will purify for Himself the (bodily) fabric of every man, to banish all Spirit of perversity from his (21) members, and purify him of all wicked deeds by the Spirit of holiness; and he will cause the Spirit of Truth to gush forth upon him like lustral water."

On the whole, we must agree that the Scrolls do not emphasize the Spirit as a sign of the end of the present age and the beginning of the Messianic Age.⁴⁶ The crucial word in the preceding sentence is "emphasize," for despite their preoccupation with the two Messiahs, the warring Spirits of truth and evil, and their feeling of election, the Qumran sectarians still gave expression to a belief that in the coming Age they would possess the Spirit in a measure that was presently lacking. The existential reality that comes to expression here is similar to that which is preserved in the Rabbinic literature. Existence

was presently incomplete, but would be fulfilled in the Messianic Age. It is time now to turn to the testimony of the primitive church, which we must recall was contemporaneous with Rabbinic Judaism and the Qumran community.

In keeping with our initial insistence on dealing with our sources with historical integrity, we shall begin our examination of Christian testimony with the pre-Pauline church. That Paul relied on tradition for some of his teaching is certain, the locus classicus being I Cor. 15:3ff. One question we must ask is, when did Paul receive the tradition which he proclaimed. His conversion is generally dated C. A.D. 33-37. His first visit to Jerusalem was some 2-3 years after this, and after which he had no direct contact with the primitive church for more than a decade (Gal. 1:18-2:1).⁴⁷ "The date, therefore, at which Paul received the fundamentals of the Gospel cannot well be later than some seven years after the death of Jesus Christ."⁴⁸ This dating puts Paul fairly near the source of the church's initial proclamation. We must also bear in mind that it was precisely "proclamation" that predominated in the primitive church. It's members were not initially concerned with the production of written documents, but were given to the preaching of the "good news" which they had experienced in their lives. It was on the basis of this proclamation and the new reality of life within the church that Paul could write his epistles and assume a common basis for their understanding. We need not concern ourselves here with each facet of the primitive proclamation (kerygma) as it appears in

the Pauline epistles.⁴⁹ Rather, our concern is to determine what role the notions of Messiah and Spirit played in the pre-Pauline church.

The Epistle to the Romans begins with a Christological formula that Paul assumes is recognizable to his readers.⁵⁰

"Concerning his Son
Who was born of the seed of David
according to the flesh
Who was appointed Son of God with
power according to the Holy Spirit
As a result of the resurrection of
the dead Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 1:3-5)⁵¹

There are several noteworthy points that suggest the pre-Pauline quality of this passage: (1) We find here a reference to Davidic descendency which Paul is not elsewhere concerned with. (2) "Holy Spirit" is literally "spirit of holiness," a distinct Semitism which Paul does not repeat. (3) Participial construction and parallelism in the sentence structure betray a formula-like quality. (4) The term "appointed" contains a tinge of adoptionism which is somewhat inconsistent with the Pauline notion of Christ's pre-existence.⁵²

The essential factor is that in this pre-Pauline formula, possibly of the early Aramaic speaking church, we find an affirmation proclaiming the Messiahship of Jesus and the present work of the Spirit. Elsewhere in the letters of Paul we observe that he can appeal to the evidence of the Spirit in the church as a datum from which he may argue concerning the nature and conditions of salvation in Christ (Gal. 3:2, I Thes. 1:6). Moreover, he refers to the significance of the presence of the Spirit as the "pledge" of the church's inheritance, and

as a token of what is yet to come (II Cor. 1:22, 5:5, Rom. 8:23, cf. Eph. 1:14), and as the source of many gifts extant in the church (I Cor. 12, 13, 14). By way of summation then, we may quote the theme of the kerygma as it comes to expression in the Pauline epistles which shall serve to reiterate our central point: "The prophecies are fulfilled, and the new Age is inaugurated by the coming of Christ."⁵³ We may turn now to another source of evidence for the kerygma, which is later and not so direct as Paul, but which nevertheless is of great importance — The Acts of the Apostles.

The speech of Peter to Cornelius (Acts 10:35-38) presents the strongest evidence for our case. The Greek of this passage is extremely rough, ungrammatical, and scarcely translatable. As we would expect, attempts have been made to improve the passage in various manuscript transmissions. However, on general exegetical principles, the more difficult reading is to be preferred. C. C. Torrey, et al., have shown that the more difficult form of the passage may be translated word for word into Aramaic, where it becomes both grammatically correct and clearly understood.⁵⁴ Torrey's restored Aramaic is as follows: "As for the word which He, the Lord of all, sent to the children of Israel, preaching the Gospel of peace through Jesus the Messiah, you know the thing (literally, 'the word') that happened through all Judaea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism which John preached; that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with Holy Spirit and power; and He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, because

God was with Him. And we are witnesses of all that he did in the country of the Jews and Jerusalem. Him they killed by hanging Him upon a tree. God raised Him up on the third day, and permitted Him to be manifest, not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen beforehand by God, namely to us, who ate and drank with Him after He rose from the dead."⁵⁵ This passage is sufficiently self-explanatory concerning the aims of our presentation. We need only acknowledge that here again is a formula, possibly from the early Aramaic speaking church, that proclaims Jesus as Messiah and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Nor is this an isolated instance in the book of Acts.⁵⁶ Especially in Acts 2:16 ff., 2:33, and 5:32 we have kerygmatic witnesses to the belief in the presence of the Spirit in the church, which are entirely consistent with the emphasis which we have observed in the kerygma as it appears in Paul. Whether the speeches attributed to Peter are actually verbatim reports is unimportant for our discussion. What remains significant is that they reflect the proclamation of the church at an early date.⁵⁷ "Whoever is responsible for the basic details of those first chapters of Acts knew exactly what the Old Testament meant by the ruach adonai."⁵⁸ Summarily then, we observe in the kerygma of Acts essentially the same attitude concerning the Messiah and the Spirit as we have found in the kerygmatic portions of Paul. (1) Jesus is the Messiah. (2) He received the anointing of the Spirit. (3) The new Age has begun with the presence of the Spirit in the church. With these preliminary conclusions in mind, we may now look to the testimony of

the gospels.

As we approach the Synoptics we should recall that the theme of Mark is the theme of kerygma as a whole, which has been expanded.⁵⁹ Further, the priority of Mark would lead us to expect reflections of this theme in Matthew and Luke. The baptismal narrative of Mark 1:1-11 and parallels shall be the locus of our attention.

The beginning of the Good News about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It is written in the book of the prophet Isaiah:

Look, I am going to send my messenger before you;
he will prepare your way.
A voice cries in the wilderness:
Prepare a way for the Lord,
make his paths straight,

and so it was that John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. All Judaea and all the people of Jerusalem made their way to him, and as they were baptised by him in the river Jordan they confessed their sins. John wore a garment of camel-skin, and he lived on locusts and wild honey. In the course of his preaching he said, 'Someone is following me, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to kneel down and undo the strap of his sandals. I have baptised you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.'

It was at this time that Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptised in the Jordan by John. No sooner had he come up out of the water than he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit, like a dove, descending on him. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you'. (Mark 1:1-11, The Jerusalem Bible)

The opening verse of Mark's gospel is most likely a title for his work as a whole. He is about to relate the good news concerning Jesus the Messiah [Son of God]. The very fact that Mark begins with such a statement, and follows it with the baptismal narrative suggests the importance (for Mark) of the

narrative. We should also be aware of the impact that these several verses would have had on the Jewish mind.

Cogently, Mark proceeds to put forth the essentials of messianic speculation. The prophecies are fulfilled (Mk. 1:2-3). The long expected Messiah had come, and was anointed with God's Holy Spirit (Mk. 1:9-11). That John the Baptist is representative of the Elijah figure, and his baptism representative of national repentance is certain.⁶⁰ However, it would be unwise to see this as a central theme in Jewish speculation that "proves" Jesus' Messiahship, for we have already witnessed the variety of speculation concerning the Messiah's appearance. For the present, there are certain characteristics of Mark's opening verses which demand our attention.

In the first place, we must recognize that Mark was not written in a vacuum. We have observed the essential elements of the primitive church's proclamation, and must assume that Mark writing C. A.D. 66 was familiar with them. That is, the structure of Mark is either dependent on tradition, or it is a creative fabrication. The evidence suggests the former.⁶¹ Secondly, that these opening verses of Mark posed problems for the church in the transmission of manuscripts can be verified by a most cursory glance at the apparatus of the Nestle-Aland Greek text. Further, we should note several important segments of the passage. First, the pronouns of the conflated quotations from Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3 are manifestly re-interpreted in a messianic sense, Jesus, and not

Yahweh, becomes the antecedent. Secondly, Mark never uses kurios of Jesus, except in the vocative in 7:28, and with the article in 11:3. Thirdly, having once laid down the principle that Jesus possesses the Spirit, Mark finds it unnecessary to make the point again except in 3:29 where it is part of the traditional saying, and essential to the story.⁶² Fourthly, the voice from the heavens is reminiscent of the Bath Qol, and the plural "heavens" reflects good Semitic usage. These brief remarks hardly do justice to the richness of the passage. However, they serve our purpose in suggesting that Mark was relying on a tradition that was significantly aware of contemporary messianic speculation, and which found in Jesus of Nazareth the fulfillment of the same.

The essential texts which we have examined are not unique to Mark. The promise of Spirit baptism (Mk. 1:8) and the gift of the Spirit to Jesus at His baptism are also a part of the Q material (Matt. 3:11-12, 16-17, and Lk. 3:16, 21-22). Therefore, we have not one, but two independent traditions of an early date in the Synoptics (using the usual analysis) which reflect accurately the kerygma, and assert it's essential messianic proclamation.⁶³ Moreover, in the canonical gospels we have a third independent witness in the Gospel according to John. Although there is no explicit reference to the baptism of Jesus, it may be implicit (Jn. 1:24-34). Of the utmost importance, however, is the Baptist's confession that he had witnessed the descent of the Spirit upon Jesus (Jn. 1:32-34). Further, in 20:22-23, John speaks of the gift of the Spirit to

the disciples in simple low-key words, and then passes from the subject without further comment. When compared to the rather dramatic Pentecosts of Acts, this again suggests a unique tradition affirming the same belief that the Spirit was again present.⁶⁴ It is also interesting to note that even though Matthew (1:18) and Luke (1:35) in their unique birth narratives connect Jesus with the notions of the Messiah and the possessor of the Spirit, they nevertheless report the gift of the Spirit again at His baptism, which may testify to the fidelity of the baptismal tradition. Also noteworthy is the fact that Mark and Matthew when compared in their entirety with Luke-Acts contain few statements about the Spirit. We may conclude that the Spirit filled experience of the early church was hardly read back into the description of Jesus' life.⁶⁵

Before we fully evaluate the foregoing material, let us look for further evidence of this tradition in the testimony of several of the early apocryphal gospels. In the Gospel according to the Hebrews (C. A.D. 100-150), written in Egypt and reflecting a Jewish-Christianity infused with syncretistic-gnostic elements we read:

Jerome on Isa. 11:2: "And it came to pass when the Lord was come up out of the water, the whole fount of the Holy Spirit descended and rested upon him, and said to him: My son, in all the prophets was I waiting for thee that thou shouldst come, and I might rest in thee. For thou art my rest, thou art my first begotten son, that reignest for ever."

Note that it is the Spirit that speaks, possibly displaying the insignificance now of the Bath Qol. Also the term "rest"

implies final union of the Spirit with Jesus. Although late by our standards, the stories and sayings of this gospel scarcely permit of their being understood as developments of either Synoptic or Johannine texts, and therein possibly hint at another independent witness.⁶⁶

The Gospel according to the Ebionites (C. A.D. 100-150), written in the regions east of the Jordan, utilizes all three of the Synoptics in the baptism narrative.

Epiphanius: Heresies 30: "4. And after much has been recorded it proceeds:

When the people were baptized, Jesus also came and was baptized by John. And as he came up from the water, the heavens were opened and he saw the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove that descended and entered into him. And a voice (sounded) from heaven that said: Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased. And again: I have this day begotten thee. And immediately a great light shone round about the place. When John saw this, it saith, he saith unto him: Who art thou, Lord? And again a voice from heaven (rang out) to him: This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. And then, it saith, John fell down before him and said: I beseech thee, Lord, baptize thou me. But he prevented him and said: Suffer it; for thus it is fitting that everything should be fulfilled."

What is of significance here, is that the Ebionites denied the virgin birth of Jesus. According to their Christology the divine sonship of Jesus rests not upon his divine conception and miraculous birth, but upon the union of the Holy Spirit with Him at the time of His baptism.⁶⁷

In the fragments of the Gospel according to the Nazarenes which is apparently dependent on canonical Matthew in some key passages, we also find a baptismal narrative, and feeling for the necessity to explain the "why" of Jesus' baptism (cf. Matt.

3:14-15).

Jerome: Dialogue against Pelagius, 3.2: "But he said unto them: Wherein (what) have I sinned, that I should go and be baptized of him? unless peradventure this very thing that I have said is a sin of ignorance."

As a result of its apparent use of Matthew, the dates for the composition of this gospel may range from the completion of Matthew (C. A.D. 85) to Hegesippus (A.D. 180) who is the first to testify to its existence. Its place of origin cannot be established with certainty, but it may reflect a non-heretical group of Syrian Christians.⁶⁸

In each of these apocryphal gospels we can witness a heightening of Christology, and a vast expansion of the kerygmatic tradition. The important point, however, is that the gift of the Spirit is of paramount importance to each of their peculiar teachings. Which again suggests the importance of the tradition, the fidelity to the basic assertions, and above all the impact that it made on the hearts and minds of men. As we should expect, this tradition proved fertile for gnostic circles. In Pistis Sophia, 120, which may have emerged from the gnostic group at Nag Hammadi,⁶⁹ but which at present we can only date C. A.D. 350-400, we can glimpse how the return of the Spirit remained significant and at the same time bore no resemblance whatever to Jewish speculation and the proclamation of the primitive church.

Pistis Sophia, 120: "(the mother of Jesus says to him) 'When thou wast little, before the Spirit came over thee, there came the Spirit from on high whilst thou wert with Joseph in a vineyard. It came to me in my house in thy likeness, and I had not recognized it and I thought

it was thou. And the Spirit said to me, 'Where is Jesus my brother, that I may meet him?' And when it said that, I was in doubt and thought it was a phantom come to tempt me. So I took it and bound it at the foot of the bed in my house, till I went out into the field to you, to thee and Joseph, and found you in the vineyard with Joseph putting up the stakes. And it came to pass that when thou heardest me tell the matter to Joseph thou didst understand and didst rejoice and say 'Where is he, that I may see him, for I am waiting for him in this place?' But when Joseph had heard thee say these words he was troubled, and we went back at once, we entered into the house, and found the Spirit bound on the bed. And we looked at thee and it, and found thee like it; and the one that was bound on the bed was untied, he embraced thee and kissed thee and thou didst kiss him: you became one."

How then shall we evaluate the foregoing evidence? Why should this particular belief be preserved? In the first instance, we may postulate that the Spirit was discernible in the public ministry of Jesus, and that His baptism, which came to signify the beginning of this ministry, became an extremely important tradition. Further, we have substantial testimony to the historicity of the Baptist's ministry in Josephus (Ant. 18.5.2), and a rather impressive array of passages dealing with the gift of the Spirit at Jesus' baptism, in both the canonical and apocryphal gospels, and the gnostic writings. In the second place, there is the combined witness of the Luke-Acts kerygma and the Pauline kerygma which testifies to the anointing of Jesus with the Holy Spirit, and its presence in the primitive church. Finally, there was the liturgical act of Christian baptism which was closely associated with the gift of the Spirit, and as a consequence would

tend to lead the church to preserve such an important parallel.⁷⁰

Whichever of these postures (if not all) we choose to make our own, the central theme is undeniable. The cumulative witness of the kerygma, Mark, Q, John, the apocryphal gospels, and the gnostic writings, all of which reflect some degree of independence, bear witness to the belief that the Holy Spirit had returned in the ministry of Jesus, and that its presence was paramount in life in the new Age. Those portions of the canonical New Testament which we have not dealt with at all, especially the non-kerygmatic portions of Paul and Acts, are filled with references to the presence of the Spirit in the post-Resurrection church. The focal point of our investigation is that from the very outset the primitive Christian community could proclaim as essential the belief that Messiah had come in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, that with his coming the Holy Spirit had returned, and was now a part of their corporate existence in the church of the new Age.

We must now look back over the entire scope of our investigation and draw our final conclusions. We have seen that the messianism of the Old Testament is far from being a single, wholly consistent doctrine that anticipated either late Jewish or early Christian speculation. "It can be made this only at the expense of ignoring many of its important emphases and imposing on much of the remainder an understanding that has come only through the enlightenment of the Christian faith. We cannot survey its aberrant elements and aberrant developments

without acknowledging the disparate and limited concepts of the very authors from whom we draw our knowledge of the messianic hope."⁷¹ In view of the variety of the messianic expectations among the Old Testament authors, the Rabbis, and the Sectarrians, and in view of the gulf that separated the expectations of the learned from those of the unlearned, it would, with an arbitrary selection of texts, be every bit as possible to "prove" that Jesus was not the Messiah as to "prove" that he was. Nor can we ignore the harsh fact that messianic speculation was to be an enduring facet of Judaism. To give but one example, Rabbi Silver in his book Messianic Speculation in Israel, traces the phenomenon through the seventeenth century.⁷² Furthermore, in spite of the emphasis of the New Testament concerning the person of the Messiah, we must remember that the contemporaries of Jesus were more interested in the establishment of the messianic kingdom than they were in the character of the Messiah.⁷³

Now we who do not believe in a capricious God may question whether the Spirit was in fact withdrawn from Israel. Indeed, for the systematic theologian, such a notion presents a contradiction in terms, for the Spirit as the sustainer of life cannot be withdrawn without life itself ceasing. This, however, is to miss the point, for whether or not the Spirit was withdrawn, the Jews of our Lord's day believed that it was. Their literature when it does not explicitly refer to the Spirit's absence, nevertheless reflects a reluctance to speak of the Ruach Yehweh, and instead relies on the pallid notions

of Shekinah and Bath Qol. Primarily then, we must recognize the theological reality of messianism, and the reality that comes to expression is a feeling of incompleteness. The Jews could speak of the presence of God and the communication from the heavens, but for some reason (and they gave many) they could not bring themselves to speak of the invasive power of the Spirit in their lives. This belonged to the past and to the future, but for the present it was lacking.

In contrast to this feeling of incompleteness, the witness of the primitive church testifies to the fulfillment that its members found in Jesus of Nazareth, as Messiah and inaugurator of the new Age of the Spirit. Indeed, as we have seen, this affirmation was basic to the proclamation of the early church. These Christians did not rely on typology for their message, even though it may have been a medium of expression. Rather, their claims were based on, and firmly rooted in the radical conviction that can only be born of experience. They had witnessed the return of the dynamic activity of God's Holy Spirit in Jesus, and had experienced its presence in their lives. The feeling of incompleteness was banished, and in its place came new life, a full life and the steadfast belief that they were joint heirs with Christ of the Kingdom of God. Here then is fulfillment, and not simply a fulfilling of particular messianic speculations, but a fulfilling of existence. "Jesus was the Messiah, the fulfillment of the hope of Israel, not by verifying predictions of isolated episodes in His life, but by bringing the reality

for which Israel hoped."⁷⁴ The ultimate achievement of our investigation of the relationship of the Messiah to the Holy Spirit, therefore, has been to re-discover the basic position of the "doctrine" of the Spirit in the proclamation of the early church, and to arrive at a means for speaking of Jesus as Messiah which is historically and exegetically reliable and theologically sound.

Appendix

The presence of these contradictions may in part be explained by the exceedingly complex character of the Rabbinic literature itself. It is with extreme care that we must approach the Babylonian Talmud and Midrashim (our chief sources), for we have here a compilation of materials with a chronology and editorial complexity exceeding that of our canonical Old Testament. To illustrate: it was not until the first quarter of the 3rd century A.D. that Rabbi Yehuda ha Nasi edited the oral traditions of the Rabbis and established the Mishnah as a potential literary document. The Gemara (explanatory additions to the Mishnah) was not completed until the 6th century A.D. This work basically completed the Babylonian Talmud except for some later additions. The various Midrashim (meticulous interpretations) of the Hebrew Bible were compiled by different editors over a period of 1000 years. This is to say nothing of the Jerusalem Talmud, the Tosefta, or the many works akin to the Mishnah, all of which presents us with a large corpus of literature which has yet to succumb fully to a critical treatment. (For a survey of the problem see Hermann L. Strack, Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash.)

Yet inspite of this seemingly bewildering display of data, we can approach the Rabbinic literature with some degree of certainty. In the first instance, we must take into account the nature of oral tradition. There is perhaps nothing in our experience that can compare to this phenomenal aspect of

Rabbinic Judaism. It is almost beyond our comprehension to believe that Rabbi Yehuda ha Nasi could edit centuries of tradition without recourse to written documents, and yet this was the case. (See Birger Gerhardson, Memory and Manuscript, pp. 93-122.) It was possible because of the great devotion of the Rabbis to the word of God as embodied in Scripture. Further, and contrary to popular opinion, the Rabbis were not legalists in the pejorative sense of the term. Indeed they were concerned with the spirit of the Law. To briefly state the case: the Rabbis firmly believed that the whole of the Law together with the rules for its interpretation were given to Moses on Mt. Sinai. Therefore, the combination of Rabbinic exegesis, as tedious as it may seem to us, and the highly developed oral tradition, made possible the belief that the teachings of the Rabbis made explicit those precepts which were implicit in written Torah and thus were equally binding. (See Z. H. Chajes, The Students Guide Through the Talmud, pp. 1-37, and especially the initial paragraph on p. 35. Also see note 27.)

It is in this belief that we can discern the seriousness of Jewish oral tradition. One illustration may serve to establish this notion in our thinking. In the book of Susanna (60-62, LXX, C. 95-80 B.C.), written to vindicate the need for cross-examining informers, and to urge the application of the ius talionis to convicted perjurers, we read: "And they dealt with them according as the Law prescribes, doing to them just as they maliciously intended against their sister."

Herein is recorded a controversy between Sadducee and Pharisee during the late years of the reign of Alexander Jannaeus concerning the punishment of false witnesses. (R. H. Charles, Apocrypha, p. 644.) After some 300 years of oral tradition we find in Makkoth 1:6, and in the Gemara to this passage, a repetition of this controversy with each side basing their opinion on their peculiar tradition. ". . . the Sadducees contended that Zomemim (false witnesses) were put to death only after the accused had [actually] been executed, pursuant to the scriptural text, 'life for life' (Deut. 19:21). said the [Pharisee] sages to them: but does not the context read: then shall ye do unto him as he purposed to do unto his brother (Deut. 19:19). . . ." We may conclude that fidelity to the traditions of one's elders was no light matter. "Allegiance to the authority of the said rabbinic tradition is binding upon all sons of Israel, since these explanations and interpretations have come down to us by word of mouth from generation to generation right from the time of Moses. They have been transmitted to us precise, correct, and unadulterated, and he who does not give his adherence to the unwritten law and the rabbinic tradition has no right to share the heritage of Israel; he belongs to the Sadducees or the Karaites who severed connection with us long ago." (Chajes, p. 4. This early 19th century Talmudist's view gives us a glimpse of the seriousness of Rabbinic oral tradition.)

Furthermore, the particular tradition that concerns us was not, as we shall see, an isolated instance in Rabbinic

literature. The number of sources that we are able to document, the ages which they span, and the fidelity of the teaching, all point to an early and enduring element in Rabbinic Judaism. Moreover, we shall subsequently examine contemporary non-Rabbinic literature of the early 1st century A.D., where we shall find expressions of similar belief concerning the Messiah, the Age, and the Spirit. Considering the foregoing, we can therefore with a comfortable amount of assurance, begin to deal with the Rabbinic literature.

Footnotes

1. Joseph Klausner, The Messianic Idea in Israel. Sigmund Mowinckel, He That Cometh. See Also T Tod 14 (1957) 292 ss for a comparison of the above.
2. Alan Richardson, An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament, p. 103.
3. Ibid., p. 103.
4. Irving F. Wood, The Spirit of God in Biblical Literature, p. 25. Wood introduces and discusses this problem at some length.
5. Ibid., p. 9.
6. Ibid., p. 7.
7. See Jud. 6:34, 11:29, 13:25, 14:6, 14:19, 15:14, and I Kings 11:6, 16:13, 19:20, 19:23.
8. Mowinckel, p. 20.
9. Ibid., p. 63. See Ps. 72, 101, 132, I Sam. 9:16, 10:1, 16:3, 16:13 ff., I Kings 19:16, II Kings 11:12.
10. Ibid., pp. 65-69. See also John L. McKenzie, "Royal Messianism", in either Myths and Realities or CBQ 19:25-52 (1957) but cf. also the anti-king source in Samuel.
11. Mowinckel, p. 3.
12. Ibid., p. 123.
13. Wood, p. 40. Although Wood's classification may be challenged by recent critical scholarship, his conclusions, even omitting questionable passages, remain reasonable.
14. Ibid., p. 41 ff.
15. Mowinckel, p. 255 ff. See also "Pais Theou as Messianic Title in the Book of Acts", CBQ 19:83-92 (1957). See also William Manson, Jesus The Messiah where the targum on Isa. 52:13-53:12 is presented in parallel columns with the M.T.
16. Laurence E. Browne, The Messianic Hope in its Historical Setting, p. 19.
17. Ibid., p. 37. See also the strong nationalism of II Isaiah, 41:11-16, 43:14, 44:21-23, 45:14-23, 47, 49:7-13 and 22-26, 52:10-12.

18. Ibid., p. 40. See Hag. 1:14, 2:2, 2:4, 2:21, 2:23, and Zech. 4:6, 7, 9, 10.
19. Ibid., p. 43.
20. Ibid., p. 52.
21. Ibid., p. 54.
22. Wood, p. 64.
23. Ibid., p. 71.
24. See Bruce Vawter, "Levitical Messianism and the New Testament", in The Bible in Current Catholic Thought, pp. 83-99.
25. W. D. Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, p. 205.
26. See Appendix.
27. See W. D. Davies, Torah in the Messianic Age and/or the the Age to Come.
28. Davies, Paul, p. 205 ff.
29. See Sotah 48b, Yoma 9b, Eccles. R. 12:7, T. Sotah 13:3-4, M. Sotah 9:12.
30. See Davies, Paul, pp. 209-216 where he refutes the positions of Marmorstein and Abelson concerning the relationship of the Shekinah to the Spirit and accounts for the few passages that refer to possession of the Spirit.
31. Ibid., p. 214.
32. Ibid., p. 215.
33. See Davies, Torah.
34. Abba Hillel Silver, A History of Messianic Speculation in Israel, p. 16. But cf. Sanh. 97a ff.
35. Ibid., p. 7.
36. See Sanh. 97a ff. for a discussion of the time of the Messianic Age and the confusion concerning the name of the Messiah.
37. Sifre Deuteronomy 173 on 18:11.
38. See Pesiktha 165a; Tanhuma 170b, 216a; Num. R. 15:25.

39. See A. Guttman in The Hebrew Union College Annual 20:363 ff. (1947); H. J. Schoeps, Theologie und Geschichte des Judenchristentums, p. 90; J. Bonsirven, Le Judaïsme Palestinien au temps de Jesus-Christ, vol. 1, p. 79f.; R. T. Herford, Christianity in Talmud and Midrash, pp. 35-96.
40. For a grouping of the Talmudic references to the character of the Age, see "Messiah, age of" in the index volume of the Soncino edition of The Babylonian Talmud which has been compiled by Dr. Judah J. Slotki.
41. See Davies, Paul, p. 216 who very positively states this conclusion.
42. In addition to the Scrolls, further information concerning the sectarian's impact on their culture may be found in other ancient literature, assuming these are the Essenes. Philo of Alexandria: Quod omnis probus liber sit; Apologia pro Judaeis. Flavius Josephus: The Jewish War; Jewish Antiquities. Pliny the Elder; Dio Chrysostom. Hippolytus; Refutation of all Heresies. See A. Dupont-Sommer: The Essene Writings From Qumran, pp. 21-38, for a compilation of the significant passages.
43. Some dispute this notion, but see George A. Riggan, Messianic Theology and Christian Faith, p. 135 ff. Also, Raymond Brown, "The Messianism of Qumran," CBQ 19:53 (1957) in which he also refutes the idea that the Teacher of Righteousness was the Messiah.
44. A. Dupont-Sommer, The Essene Writings From Qumran, p. 92, Note 2.
45. See W. D. Davies, "Paul and the Dead Sea Scrolls," in Stendahl's The Scrolls and the New Testament, pp. 157-182.
46. Ibid., p. 177.
47. C. H. Dodd, "Chronology of the Acts and the Pauline Epistles" in Helps to the Study of the Bible, pp. 212-213.
48. C. H. Dodd, The Apostolic Preaching and its Development, p. 16.
49. For a ready reference to the kerygmatic passages as a whole, see the fold out at the end of Dodd's Apostolic Preaching. Cf. John H. P. Reumann, "The Kerygma and the Preacher," Dialog 3:27-35 (1964).
50. Dodd, Preaching, p. 14. See also Werner R. Kramer, Christ, Lord, Son of God for his treatment of Rom. 1:1-4.

51. I have chosen to follow the triadic arrangement of this passage as suggested by A. M. Hunter, Paul and His Predecessors, pp. 24-26. So T. W. Manson, "Romans" Peake's Commentary on the Bible, and the Syriac translation of this passage in the Peshitta. See also the treatments of this passage by Sanday and Headlam in the ICC, and C. K. Barrett in "Romans," (Harper Series). Sanday and Headlam recognize that Paul would have had difficulty with this formula, but suggest that he, with the early church, would not see "appointed" as the time at which Jesus "became" Son of God. Rather the Resurrection was a "declaration" of Sonship with a new impact for men. Barrett suggests the words "in power" and "after his resurrection from the dead" may be Pauline interpolations. So Kramer, Christ, Lord, Son of God concerning the words "in power". Kramer regards the passage as an early formula of the Aramaic speaking church which was interpreting the Resurrection, pp. 108-111. None of these commentators has dealt with the significance of the reference to the Spirit in other than a cursory fashion. In any event we are not concerned with the time at which Jesus was "appointed" Son of God, but that the early Aramaic (Kramer) church could affirm a belief in the return of the Spirit. The triadic form of the passage aids in emphasizing this point, and serves to point out the problematic phrase.
52. Dom Gregory Dix, Jew and Greek, pp. 76-81. Dix discusses here the notion of functional Christology.
53. Dodd, Preaching, p. 17. Also Reumann op. cit.
54. Ibid., p. 19. See also Kramer, Christ, Lord, Son of God who recognizes this as a pistis formula.
55. Quoted from Dodd, Preaching, p. 27 f.
56. Cf. Acts 2:16 ff., 2:38-39, 3:24-26, 2:33, 5:32.
57. Dodd, Preaching, pp. 19-35. But cf. John T. Townsend, "The Speeches in Acts," AnglTR 42:150-159 (1960), and Kummel, Werner Georg (editor) Introduction to the New Testament, pp. 112-132.
58. Smith, N., The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, p. 25.
59. Dodd, Preaching, p. 47. See also Vincent Taylor, The Gospel According to St. Mark, pp. 151-158 who also argues that Mark is drawing heavily upon early tradition, especially in vs. 1-11. He also presents the relevant counter-arguments.

60. For a summary of the prophet figure in the Qumran community and in other speculation see Raymond Brown "The Messianism of Qumran" in CBQ 19:53 (1957).
61. See above, note 63.
62. Sherman E. Johnson, A Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Mark, p. 32.
63. Eduard Schweizer, Spirit of God, p. 27 ff.
64. Ibid., p. 34 ff. Cf. Acts 2:1 ff., 4:31, 10:44.
65. Ibid., p. 33. See also C. K. Barrett, The Holy Spirit and the Gospel Tradition, especially pp. 5-45, 140-162.
66. Wilhelm Schneemelcher, editor, New Testament Apocrypha I, p. 159.
67. Ibid., p. 155.
68. Ibid., pp. 139-146.
69. Ibid., pp. 250-252.
70. We must avoid a literal-objective image of the return of the Spirit as it is presented by Matthew and especially Luke. It is interesting to note that both could later report the questioning of the Baptist (Mt. 11:2-6, Lk. 7:19-23) and not feel the inconsistency this implied in their use of Q for the baptism of Jesus. Mark does not record this questioning, nor does he objectify the return of the Spirit. To say that the gift of the Spirit at Jesus' baptism was an affirmation of faith, rather than an objectively discernible event, is to say a great deal. Cf. Barrett, Holy Spirit, who emphasizes the importance of the liturgical act of Christian baptism, p. 141. Vincent Taylor, St. Mark, sees the reference to a Spirit baptism as a Christian interpolation placed into John's preaching. However, there is no manuscript evidence to support this conclusion, and the evidence we have presented certainly testifies to a belief in the outpouring of the Spirit in pre-Christian messianic speculation. Cf. Morton S. Enslin, The Prophet From Nazareth, pp. 41-44.
71. Vawter, "Messianic Prophecies in Apologetics," Studies in Salvation History, p. 75.
72. Silver, op. cit. See also Julius H. Greenstone, The Messiah Idea in Jewish History.
73. Joseph De Vault, "The End of Days: Messianic Expectation in Judaism," Contemporary New Testament Studies, p. 52.

74. John McKenzie, "The Transformation of Old Testament
Messianism," Studies in Salvation History, p. 98.

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